The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY, BELFAST.

No. 5.] BELFAST, MAY 1st, 1881, [For Gratuitous Circulation.

THE Jubilee to which we have all been looking forward with so much interest and hope has passed, and we are able to record our satisfaction and thankfulness that in every respect it has transcended the expectations of the most sanguine. Many of our friends were doubtful whether such a series of meetings could possibly be held within one week, and command any manner of success. Every doubter has rejoiced that his fears were groundless, and has been delighted with the abundant blessing that has been bestowed.

Our Jubilee began with Religious Services at Cairncastle, Moneyrea, Mountpottinger, Carrickfergus, and Rosemary Street, Belfast. In Rosemary Street, we had The Rev. H. W. Crosskey from Birmingham, who enchained the attention of the two congregations that listened to him by his brilliant discourses, and the reverent devotional tone that pervaded his thoughtful utterances. We are glad to say that his morning discourse will be printed in a forthcoming Jubilee volume. The funds of the Society will be considerably augmented by the collections, and the interest in its work and aims will be much increased in our various town and country congregations. We shall report the details of the collections in the various churches in our next Number.

THE WELCOME BREAKFAST.

On Monday morning the New Hall in Mr. Fisher's Café was crowded by ladies and gentlemen who, under the presidency of Dr. Ritchie, J.P., met to partake of a substantial breakfast, and to welcome the Representatives who were present from England and Scotland. The following gentlemen were the Representatives and visitors :—C. J. G. Eiloart, Esq., the British and Foreign Unitarian Association ; J. Carter Hollins, Esq., the N. & E. Lancashire Unitarian Mission ; Rev. G. T. Walters, the Scottish Unitarian Christian Association ; Rev. C. J. Street, M.A., the Free Congregational Union, E. Lancashire ; F. Allen, Esq., the Sunday School Association ; Rev. P. M. Higginson, M.A., the Manchester District Sunday School Association, and the Rev. H W. Crosskey, of Birmingham, and T. Brittain, Esq., of Manchester.

Dr. Ritchie's address, which we give in extenso, gave the right tone to the proceedings. He spoke as follows :—

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure on the occasion of this Jubilee of the Unitarian Society, whose interests we all have so much at heart, to offer a hearty welcome to the numerous representatives from various parts of the United Kingdom who have honoured us with their presence. We have desired to make these meetings as comprehensive and catholic as possible, and it is a great satisfaction to us to have met with so gratifying a response to our invitation. A resolution of welcome will be submitted to you, which I am sure will command your warm approval. The Unitarian Society was established fifty years ago. At that time the controversy of creeds was very fierce. Strong and brave men fought on opposite sides. They did their duty, and we honour them for it. The conditions are changed now. Many of the old controversies are dead, and subjects which formerly drove men into hostile camps are now never discussed. We live in an age of science. The larger knowledge we have of the natural laws of the universe has broadened and deepened our theology and made us more tolerant of differences. Our reading is wider. The books of science and philosophy are doing our work in eradicating error and superstition, and we welcome joyfully the new revelations which they bring to us from day to day. But our grasp of the reality of God's existence, of the moral grandeur of Jesus of Nazareth, of the brotherhood of mankind, and of the progressiveness of our race is stronger than ever—(hear, hear)—and we start from this Jubilee as a point of departure into our nobler work, and desire that we and those who come after us may be faithful to the responsibilities laid upon us and upon them. I trust, ladies and gentlemen, that our proceedings of to-day and throughout this week may be marked by great earnestness of purpose and crowned with solid success." (Applause.)

Moved by J. M. Darbishire, Esq., (President of the Unitarian Society) ; Seconded by Hugh Hyndman, Esq., LL.B., and supported by E. A. Fuhr, Esq., and Herbert Darbishire, Esq., and unanimously carried.

"That we offer a cordial welcome, on behalf

of the members and friends of the Unitarian Society, to—

The Rev. H. W. Crosskey, F.G.S., of Birmingham, the Preacher of the Jubilee Sermons;

C. J. G. Eiloart, Esq., the Representative of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association;

The Rev. G. T. Walters, of Aberdeen, the Representative of the Scottish Unitarian Christian Association;

The Rev. C. J. Street, M.A., of Padiham, the Representative of the "Free Congregational and Sunday School Union of N.E. Lancashire;

J. Carter Hollins, Esq., the Representative of the N.E. Lancashire Unitarian Mission;

The Rev. P. M. Higginson, M.A., of Styal, the Representative of the Manchester District Sunday School Association;

Frederick Allen, Esq., the Representative of the London Sunday School Association;

Thomas Brittain, Esq., of Manchester;

And all other visitors, and we desire to convey through them our good wishes for the welfare of the principles and institutions which they represent at this Jubilee of the Unitarian Society."

Moved by T. M'Clelland, Esq., J.P.

"That Dr. Ritchie do now leave the Chair, and that J. M. Darbishire, Esq, do take the same."

Moved by T. M'Clelland, Esq., J.P.; Seconded by Rev. J. C. Street, and unanimously carried.

"That the cordial thanks of this meeting be given to Dr. Ritchie, J.P., for his conduct in the Chair this day, and for his life-long support of Unitarian principles and institutions."

The addresses were of a most interesting character. It would be a pleasure to report them, but our space will not allow us. In them all there was a large catholic spirit and a healthy tone which was felt and responded to by all who were present. Mr. Crosskey inspired every one by his rare eloquence and fine spirit, and Dr. F. R. Lees, of Leeds, who was present as a guest, added some helpful thoughts to the enjoyment of the day. Every one felt that it was good to be present.

MONEYREA SOIREE.

The second event of the day was the drive out in omnibuses, cars, &c., to Moneyrea, where a Jubilee Soiree was to be held. Our visitors will not soon forget the sweet country drive, the great gathering of Moneyrea friends, the groups of ministers and laymen; the tea lasting from 6 to 8-30 p.m., and the large meeting in the spacious church, under the presidency of Mr. David M'Master of Moneyrea. There were capital speeches of a most cheerful tone. It was near midnight when the Belfast visitors reached their home, and it was doubtless still later when all the farmers and their wives and families were safe in their homesteads. The Jubilee will not soon be forgotten in Moneyrea.

CONFERENCE.

On Tuesday afternoon, at three o'clock, there was a Conference, in the Rosemary Street Hall, under the Presidency of the Nestor of Liberal Religion in Ireland, Rev. S. C. Nelson, of Downpatrick. His speech was full of youthful fire and energy, although more than fourscore years had snowed their winters upon the speaker's head. The venerable man was found to be now as ever on the side of freedom, of inclusiveness, and of fidelity. He was the natural Chairman of the Jubilee Conference. Two Papers were read—one by E. Gardner, LL.B., on the "History of the Unitarian Society," and one by T. M'Clelland, J.P., on "The Growth of Unitarianism in Ulster." Both papers were of great value and are to be printed in a volume along with other parts of the Jubilee proceedings. These papers will prove of inestimable service in forming the minds of the young members of our Churches, and in deepening their attachment to the principles of Religious Liberty and Freedom of Inquiry.

The cordial thanks of the Conference were conveyed to the venerable chairman by the Rev. J. C. Street.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual Meeting of the Society, which took place in the evening, in the Hall of the Second Congregation, was a brilliant success. Everything was encouraging. There was a large and enthusiastic attendance, and the Reports, as will be seen, were of the most gratifying character. The Chairman (J. M. Darbishire, Esq.), was in his happiest vein, the speeches were of an interesting and stimulating character, and Mr. Crosskey was at his very best, and completely enthralled the audience by his magnificent vindication of the great work of Theodore Parker, and his contention for the large spirit of inclusiveness which characterised the Unitarian Society of Belfast. Throughout the proceedings there was evident

a spirit of earnestness and confidence which argued well for the future success of the Society. Unfortunately we cannot report the speeches, we have not space, but we are sure the influence of the meeting will be felt throughout our entire community.

The following were the Reports, which were presented by R. M'Calmont, Esq., and Hugh Hyndman, Esq., and we commend them to the serious attention of our readers :—

In presenting their Report for the year 1880-1 your Committee cannot avoid calling your attention to the fact that it is just half-a-century since the Unitarian Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge was established. The fifty years thus passed away have been very eventful, and they have witnessed many changes. In the personnel of the Society there has naturally been a total change. The founders have passed away and entered upon their rest. Most of those who carried on the work during the early years of the history of the Society, have also ceased from their labours, while some few survivors, who for a number of years did good service in connection with the Society, have ceased to take any part in its proceedings.

For a considerable period there was a great and useful work done, but there was little to mark any development or progress. Silent changes, however, were working, which ultimately led to important results. The scope of religious inquiry enlarged ; new fields of thought were explored by devout and accomplished minds ; and a gradual revolution took place in the theological convictions of many members of the Unitarian body.

Out of this grew a desire for a wider reading, and Members of the Unitarian Society were anxious to avail themselves of the opportunity of obtaining through the Society the books which were producing such important results. Unfortunately some of the older members of the Society could not see their way to allow such books as Theodore Parker's to be obtained through the Society. But those who desired the newer books were quite ready to obtain all the older books for the use of those who desired them. They claimed for themselves the rights and privileges they conceded to others. This led to disputes and finally to a secession. The old Society remained, adapting itself to the enlarging needs of the age, and it is now celebrating its Jubilee, and a new Society was formed on the narrower and more restricted basis.

But the Society whose Committee offer their Report to-day, have to record uninterrupted progress in its affairs. The year just ended will compare favourably with any of its predecessors, and the following facts will tell their own story.

At their first meeting the General Committee secured the services of J. M. Darbishire, Esq., as President for the year, and also appointed the Vice Presidents and Working Committees. The Society has been very fortunate in its Officers.

The General Committee have met three times during the year.

The Executive Committee have met twelve times, and the attendance of the members has been as follows :—

W. A. Adamson	2	D. W. Moore	1
J. M. Darbishire	10	J. F. Mulligan	10
W. C. Dobbin	4	John R. Neill	1
George Fisher	7	John Ritchie	1
T. M'Clelland, J.P.	12	Rev. H. Rylett	6
David M'Master	5	D. Thompson	10
James M'Williams	5	Rev. J. J. Wright	9
John Millin	0		

H. Hyndman, *Treasurer* 11

Secretaries :

Rev. J. C. Street 12 R. M'Calmont 10

The Treasurer's Statement for the year shews £455 11s. 0½d. receipts, and £465 7s. 0d. expenditure.

The Sales at the Depository for the year 1879 amounted to £181 19s. 8d., being an increase of £15 1s. 6d. on the previous year; and the Sales for 1880 amount to £275 14s. 2½d., being an increase of £93 14s. 6½d. on the year 1879. The number of Books sold during the year was 2,699. Your Committee refer to these facts with the greatest pleasure.

Miss Dickson has proved herself a most efficient agent, and your Committee are glad of the opportunity of bearing testimony to her great attention to duty, and her successful management of the affairs intrusted to her care.

During the year your Committee were able to secure the services of the Rev. S. C. Nelson,

M.A., to represent them at the London Sunday School Association; of the Rev. J. J. Wright at the Manchester District Sunday School Association in Liverpool, and of R. M'Calmont, Esq., F.C.S., at the Scottish Unitarian Christian Association in Edinburgh. All these gentlemen were most cordially received, and your Committee were glad through them to express sympathy with our brethren in England and Scotland.

Among the books which have had a good sale during the year are the Life and Works of Parker, Channing's Works, Arnold's "Light of Asia," Chadwick's "Bible of To-Day," Sunderland's "What is the Bible," &c., while there has been a steady demand for all the books which your Committee have been able to call attention to.

Two excellent Sunday School Conferences were held, the first at Rosemary Street, Belfast, in the month of October, 1880, where the Rev. J. C. Street spoke on "How the Bible may be used with profit in Sunday Schools;" and the Second at Comber in the month of Jan., 1881, when the Rev. T. Dunkerley, B.A., read a paper on "Teachers' Preparation Classes." At both of these Conferences J. M. Darbishire, Esq., presided, and both were productive of good results.

The Annual Floral Service for children took place in Rosemary Street Church, Belfast, which was crowded to the doors by the children from the various Sunday Schools, their parents and friends. The Service was conducted by the Revs. J. J. Wright and J. C. Street.

Much attention has been paid to Sunday School matters by the Committee who have charge of that department, and they have brought under the notice of the schools various excellent books during the year, especially Mr. Bartram's "Stories from the Book of Genesis;" Mr. Wright's "Play with your own Marbles," &c.; "Teachers' Notes," "Sunnyside;" "Spring Sunbeams."

One of the most interesting, if not most important, steps taken during the year, was the monthly publication of the *Chronicle and Index*, beginning with January in the present year. It has long been felt that some organ of communication between your Committee and subscribers, as well as with members of our churches, was greatly needed, and it was believed that such an organ would render substantial service to the cause of Religious Freedom and Truth. Four numbers have now been published, and your Committee have ample evidence that their little messenger, which is gratuitously circulated, is doing a most useful work. Not only does it record the doings of the Society, and of our churches in the district, but it calls attention to useful and valuable books, and so brings them under the notice of many who otherwise would know nothing about them. Your Committee feel sure that the Society will heartily approve of the continuance of this publication.

In looking back over the past history of the Society, and especially upon the labours of the last few years, your Committee are of opinion that much good work has been done, and that your Depository has proved a valuable agency for the distribution of healthy religious literature in the community. Sometimes, however, they are inclined to think that the great changes which have taken place in the religious thought of the age, the smoothing away of so many bitter prejudices, the immense liberalization of all theological literature, and the all but universal liberalism of general literature, render the continuance of a special Depository for the sale of books unnecessary. There are so many facilities now for obtaining the broader literature of the age, that almost every bookseller does the work of a Unitarian Depository, and nearly every scholar and scientific student is, in a large degree, a missionary of the principles of our faith. But your Committee think that for the present a sphere of usefulness can still be found for your Depository, if only in the constant putting into the forefront the books which, though supplied elsewhere, are only scattered among other literature. Your Depository emphasizes these books, and brings them into prominence. It brings before the public eye books that otherwise might be unnoticed, and it helps, therefore, in the healthy development of a wider religious growth.

Your Society itself is an agency of union and strength. It brings together the Thinkers and Workers. It provides a field for the consideration of work and life. It enables each to serve all. And it tends largely to the strengthening of the great cause of Free Inquiry, and Spiritual Growth.

Your Committee do not forget that fifty years ago the Society was formed "for the promotion of religious information and the practice of virtue," and "to procure and disseminate such religious publications as are best calculated to correct prevailing errors, and inculcate sound religious views," and they believe that it never

did this work more efficiently or with greater fidelity than in the year just ended. They re turn to you the trust you confided to them, and they believe they hand back to you the affairs of the Society in a more vigorous and healthy state than at any previous period of its history.

The Treasurer in Account with the Unitarian Society, for the year ending, 31st Dec., 1880.

Dr.

1880.						
Jan. 1	To Balance brought from previous Account				£22 17 8	
,,	Annual Sermons—Second Congregation			£21 11 11		
	Mountpottinger,			2 16 1		
	Carrickfergus,			0 11 6		
					24 10 6	
,,	Subscriptions—TOWN.					
	Belfast omitted last yr.		£0 10 0			
	Current year,		47 14 0			
	Mountpottinger, do.,		4 15 0			
				52 19 0		
	COUNTRY.					
	Antrim,		0 2 6			
	Ballee,		0 12 6			
	Ballyclare		0 10 2			
	Carrickfergus		1 0 0			
	Comber		1 7 6			
	Downpatrick		2 15 0			
	Dromore		0 5 0			
	Dundalk		0 5 0			
	Dunmurry		1 0 0			
	Holywood		0 2 6			
	Killinchy		0 5 0			
	Larne		1 0 0			
	Moneyrea		1 7 6			
	Newry (old 5s)		0 17 6			
	Newtownards		0 2 6			
	Rademon		0 5 0			
	Templepatrick		0 7 6			
	Various		0 15 0			
				12 10 0		
					65 9 0	
,,	Receipts at Depository				275 14 2½	
,,	Rents				53 13 4	
,,	Annual Meeting (Soiree)				1 11 0	
,,	Sunday School Conference				1 1 6	
,,	Floral Service (Bal.)				3 4 10	
1881 ,,	Balance to next account				9 15 11½	
					£465 7 0	

Cr.

1880.				
By Incidental Expenses—				
	Agent for Sundries	£20 12 2		
	Printing, Advertising, Postage, &c.,	12 4 6		
	Annual Sermons, Preacher	6 6 0		
	Annual Meeting (Soiree)	1 7 11		
	Sunday School Conference	2 3 7		
	Floral Service	0 4 5		
			42 18 7	
,,	Agency Expenses—			
	Salary of Agent		30 0 0	
,,	Rent and Taxes—			
	Capt. Barret	81 12 6		
	Taxes	6 10 10		
			88 3 4	
,,	Repairs		0 4 6	
,,	Insurance		1 2 6	
,,	Books and Stationery		302 18 1	
			£465 7 0	

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted.

Moved by Rev. J. C. Street; Seconded by E. A. Fuhr, Esq.

"That the Report and Statement of Accounts be adopted, and that they be printed and circulated among the Subscribers and friends of the Society."

The Officers and Committee were then appointed as follows:—

TREASURER:
Hugh Hyndman, L.L.B.

SECRETARIES:
Rev. J. C. Street and R. M'Calmont, F.C.S.

COMMITTEE:

W. A. Adamson.	D. M'Master.
J. M. Darbishire.	J. F. Mulligan.
W. C. Dobbin	J. R. Neill
Geo. Fisher	John Ritchie
Rev. J. A. Kelly.	Rev. H. Rylett.
Dr. John M'Caw	D. Thompson
Rev. J. J. Wright.	Rev. F. Thomas
Jas. M'Williams.	

AUDITORS:
D. W. Moore and John Dobbin.

Moved by T. M'Clelland, Esq., J.P.; Seconded by J. F. Mulligan, Esq.

"That we offer our hearty thanks to the various ministers who preached on Sunday last on behalf of the Unitarian Society, and especially to the Rev. H. W. Crosskey, for his helpful and inspiring Jubilee Sermons."

The Rev. H. W. Crosskey Responded.

Moved by John R. Neill, Esq.; Seconded by Rev. J. J. Wright.

"That we rejoice in the progress of our Religious principles in the world, and in the growing attention which is being paid to the moral and religious education of the young."

Revs. C. J. Street, and P. M. Higginson Responded.

Moved by John Ritchie, Esq.; Seconded by D. M'Master, Esq.

"That we record our gratitude to J. M. Darbishire, Esq., for his services as President during the past year, and for his untiring devotion to the principles on which the Unitarian Society is based.

A few timely words from the Chairman concluded the proceedings of a meeting which must

ever rank as ths most successful ever held in connection with the Society.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CONFERENCE.

On Wednesday afternoon there was a very successful Conference held in the School Room of the Second Congregation, under the Chairmanship of T. M'Clelland, Esq., J.P., in connection with the Sunday School Department of the Society. There was a capital attendance, and an excellent spirit prevailed. R. M'Calmont, Esq., F.R.S., read a most interesting paper on "The History of the Northern Sunday School Association," and he was followed by the Rev. P. M. Higginson, M.A., who read a paper on "Sunday Schools and Practical Morals." A discussion followed, in which a considerable number of speakers from England as well as local friends took part; and a profitable period was spent until nearly six o'clock. On the motion of Mr. Darbishire, a hearty vote of thanks was awarded to the readers of the papers, and the Chairman.

MISSIONARY MEETING.

On the evening of the same day a most attractive Missionary Meeting was held in the Church of the Second Congregation, under the Presidency of the Rev. J. C. Street. This meeting was one of the special features of the Jubilee celebrations, and proved to be profoundly interesting. The attendance was very good, and the beautiful and reverent spirit that pervaded the gathering will never be forgotten. After a hymn had been sung and a prayer sent up to heaven, the Chairman explained that the object of the gathering was to take advantage of the presence of ministers and laymen from a distance, and to ask them to open out their souls on "The Mission of our Church," and he was sanguine that bright and suggestive thoughts would be struck out in the course of the evening, which would tend to the good of each and all. His hope was more than justified in the admirable addresses delivered by Rev. H. Rylett of Moneyrea, Rev. G. T. Walters of Aberdeen, Rev. C. J. Street of Padiham, Rev. P. M. Higginson of Styal, Rev. J. J. Wright of Mountpottinger, J. Carter Hollins, Esq., of Bolton, and T. Brittain, Esq., of Manchester. The proceedings were brought to a close by the singing of a hymn and prayer.

CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL.

Following upon all these meetings so successful and happy, was one for the children which was the crown and completion of all. On Thursday there was an ample and substantial tea provided for the children of the Schools at Rosemary Street, Mountpottinger, and Hopeton Street, in the Rosemary Street Schools, and it was a pleasant sight to witness the thorough enjoyment of the young people. After tea they and their friends, and a large body of visitors crowded into the spacious church, and enjoyed the reading, and musical and lime-light rendering of "Jessica's First Prayer." A more enjoyable occasion will hardly be remembered by any who were present. The story was touchingly read by the Rev. C. J. Street and J. J. Wright; the lime-light illustrations were admirably given by Mr. M'Calmont and Mr. Courtenay, and the music was sweetly rendered by the choir and children, under the direction of Mr. Allen the Organist. The utmost order and decorum marked the proceedings of the evening, and there was not a child present who will not long remember the Jubilee of the Uniiarian Society.

This meeting concluded a series of gatherings in connection with Unitarianism in Belfast, which have never been equalled for solid success and the earnest manifestation of spiritual unity and religious life. An elegant and bounteous hospitality was extended by our friends to all the visitors and representatives who honoured the meetings with their presence, and kindly feelings were called forth which will be sure to ripen into warm friendships, and closer religious fellowship. No one will easily forget the completeness of the arrangements for the meetings, and the success which marked them from first to last, and every one will look forward with great hope to a season of growing prosperity and nobler development. We ourselves are full of gladness and spiritual joy. We are thankful to be at last out of the region of miserable disputes and contentions, and to be united in a great work and a lofty aim. We thank God and take courage!

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Man the Offspring of God.	,,	H. W. CROSSKEY, F.G.S.
Salvation.	,,	ALEX. GORDON, M.A.
Jesus Christ.	,,	C. BEARD, B.A.
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